



**Green Bay Area  
Public School District**

*Engagement. Equity. Excellence.*

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Good morning. I am Brenda Warren, school board president for the Green Bay Area Public School District.

I first want to acknowledge and extend my appreciation for the work of the legislators and governor that has resulted in increased per-student dollars and the ability for districts like ours to incrementally increase our revenue limits toward the state average. This is certainly a first step toward equity in funding.

These increases in funding are certainly very helpful; however, they still fall short of providing real equity for the students in the Green Bay Area Public Schools and other districts who have higher percentages of low income students and English Learners (EL).

Our district sees significant disparity in funding for low income students and English Learners, because the percentages of students in these groups differ significantly across districts.

Our district has an increasing percentage of students who have experienced some sort of trauma. Trauma tends to occur at a higher rate in low income student populations and negatively affects brain development. Trauma not only impacts a child's cognitive abilities but also their ability to control behaviors and impulses. We have some students who are not able to learn in classrooms because of severe emotional stress as a result of trauma. It takes a lot of resources to get a child like this "ready for school." And, I am not even referring to the extra academic supports many low income students also need.

Our school district has an alternative school, Dr. Rosa Minoka-Hill School, that serves students with social, emotional and academic challenges. While Minoka-Hill has been very successful in meeting students' needs, thereby enabling them to return to their home schools, it is a higher-cost school compared to a traditional school setting as it provides many additional resources, including on-site mental health resources.

Low income students also have a higher rate of transiency. This results in students who need additional services as they often have gaps in their learning. One solution to addressing academic concerns is to provide transportation to students when they move to allow them to attend their original school. However, this is a significant expense for which there is no additional state or federal aid.

Due to the disproportionately higher percentage of low income students in our district, our costs to provide trauma-informed care and other intensive services also increase at a rate that is disproportionate to other suburban school districts.

These same inequities occur with EL students. It costs more to support their language needs, but those services are necessary so that they have the same opportunities to be successful. Those costs, again, are disproportionate compared to other districts, because districts like ours have a much higher percentage of our students who need EL services compared to suburban districts.

Providing **equal** dollar amounts for per-student increases in funding does not provide the necessary **equity** to provide our low income and EL students the supports necessary for success. Providing equity in funding will help to ensure that all students' emotional, language and academic needs are met, regardless of their circumstances, and that they ALL will have the same opportunity to become college, career and community ready.

I respectfully ask you to look at an equitable per-student funding formula that takes the actual costs to educate each student into account rather than merely funding students with equal dollars as if they all cost the same to educate.

Thank you for your time and for giving me this opportunity to speak.

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